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Testo del comunicato

Vedi allegato.

"NEXT-GEN-EU" CONTRACTS FUNDED WITH 340M€ AT COMPLETION SIGNED BY AVIO FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW GREEN LIQUID PROPULSION LAUNCHERS

Rome, June 29, 2022 – Today the first two contracts of Italy's implementation of the "Next Gen EU" initiatives for Space were awarded to Avio. In the past few months, the Italian Government had decided to invest around 340M€ to improve the technological capability of the Italian industry for "Access to Space", entrusting the European Space Agency (ESA) as the Contracting Authority with the supervision of the Prime Minister's Office, the Italian Space Agency and the Ministry of Innovation & Digital Transformation. The goal is to leverage existing capabilities established in Italy since the early 2000s through the Vega, Vega C and Vega E programs to develop next generation propulsion technologies and launch system architectures.

The contracts were signed at the headquarters of the Ministry of Technological Innovation and Digital Transition in Rome, in presence of Minister Vittorio Colao, ESA Launchers' Director Daniel Neuenschwander and Avio CEO Giulio Ranzo.

With these two contracts, two key development programs are now starting, the first one, funded with 217,5M€ at completion, devoted to the development by 2026 of an in-flight demonstrator of new technologies and architectures for a two-stage-to-orbit liquid propulsion small launcher powered by green LOX-methane engines. The second one, funded with 120M€ at completion, devoted to the development of a new LOX-methane green engine with High Thrust to be tested on ground by 2026 for qualification. On both these development streams Avio will be able to leverage past experience on cryogenic LOX-methane propulsion which started many years ago in cooperation with the Italian Space Agency and recently led to the first successful ground testing in Europe for this type of rocket engines.

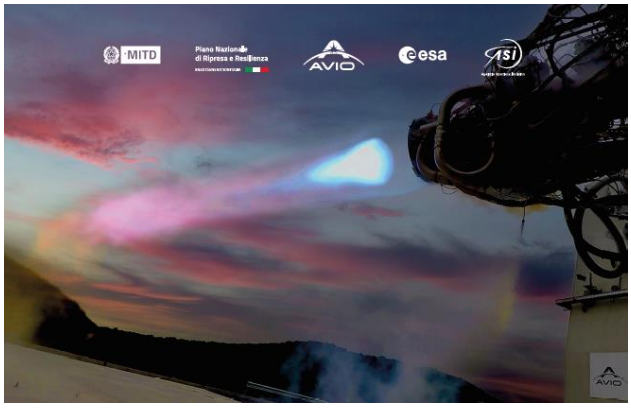
LOX-methane technologies, given their clean-combustion characteristics, are ideally suited for potential re-usability and allow today extensive use of single-material/single-part 3D-printed manufacturing. Initial work orders to cover the next few months of work were signed for a total value of around 11M€.

The goal of the two projects is to prepare the ground for next-generation space transportation systems beyond Vega E, based on green liquid propulsion (potentially re-usable) technology. The projects will be led by Avio as a Prime Contractor in light of its vast past experience as system developer, and will be supported by an Italian industrial supply chain as well as by Italian research centres and universities. Avio also plans to engage with innovative start-ups and SMEs to accelerate the development cycle. In parallel, an ambitious hiring plan has been kicked-off at the beginning of 2022 to upgrade Avio's engineering and operations talent pool with highly skilled resources, leading to over 150 new hires to date on a total population of circa 1100 employees. More opportunities for young competent and motivated engineers will be available in the next 12 months.

Avio's CEO Giulio Ranzo has commented: *"With these very important contracts Avio will be able to expand its capabilities in next-generation liquid propulsion launchers well beyond*

Vega E, preparing the ground for increased competitiveness for the next decade. The in-flight demonstrator and a high thrust engine are the key building blocks that, in combination with a robust past experience at system and propulsion levels, will enable improved flexibility and cost-effectiveness of our products and solutions. Italy will thus hold full-fledged capabilities to suit any demand requirement for space launch and in-space transportation".

ESA's Director of Launcher Daniel Neuenschwander has commented: *"Vega is a key strategic asset contributing to the freedom of action for Europe in space. With the imminent inaugural flight of Vega C, the preparation of Vega E and now the signature of these contracts to prepare the following generation of versatile, competitive and increasingly environment friendly launch services will be offered on the market. ESA as qualification authority is supporting the clear plan ahead for future space transportation services"*



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Avio in short

Avio is a leading international group engaged in the construction and development of space launchers and solid and liquid propulsion systems for space travel. The experience and knowhow built up over more than 50 years puts Avio at the cutting edge of the space launcher sector, solid, liquid and cryogenic propulsion and tactical propulsion. Avio operates in Italy, France and France Guyana with 5 facilities, employing approx. 1,000 highly-qualified personnel, of which approx. 30% involved in research and development. Avio is a prime contractor for the Vega programme and a sub-contractor for the Ariane programme, both financed by the European Space Agency ("ESA"), placing Italy among the limited number of countries capable of producing a complete spacecraft.

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